

polymer material having a higher melt temperature than that of the second polymer material, the second segments having been melted and being a binder of the fiber-containing material, the first and second segments having been at least partially split from each other prior to melting of the second segments, wherein the fiber-containing material has cross-over points of the first segments with each other, where the first segments cross each other, wherein the second polymer material, of the second segments, is substantially only at the cross-over points where the first segments cross each other, and wherein the multi-component fibers have a size of at most 1 denier per fiber (dpf).

30. (Thrice Amended) Fiber-containing material made from a plurality of multi-component fibers, each multi-component fiber including at least first and second segments, the first and second segments being made respectively of a first polymer material and a second polymer material, the first polymer material having a higher melt temperature than that of the second polymer material, the first segments of the plurality of multi-component fibers having cross-over points with each other, where the first segments cross each other, wherein second polymer material, of the second segments, has been melted and is substantially only at the cross-over points where the first segments cross each other, to act as a binder of the fiber-containing material, and wherein the multi-component fibers have a size of at most 1 denier per fiber (dpf).

67. (Twice Amended) Fiber-containing material, made by a process comprising the steps of:

collecting a plurality of multi-component fibers, the multi-component fibers having at least first segments and second segments respectively made of first and second polymer materials, the first polymer material having a higher melt temperature than that of the second polymer material, the multi-component fibers having a size of at most 1 denier per fiber (dpf);

splitting the second segments at least partially from the first segments; and

after said splitting, thermally bonding the first segments, to form the fiber-containing material, by melting the second polymer material of the second segments,

wherein in the collecting step, the plurality of multi-component fibers form cross-over points with each other, and in the thermal bonding step the second polymer material of the second segments is melted so as to encapsulate the first segments at cross-over points of the first segments, the first segments crossing each other at the cross-over points of the first segments after the thermal bonding, and

wherein after the thermal bonding the second polymer material of the second segments is substantially only at the cross-over points of the first segments, where the first segments cross each other.

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77. (Amended) Fiber-containing material according to claim 67,
wherein, in the step of thermally bonding the first segments, the second
polymer material of the second segments is completely melted.

Please add the following new claims to the application:

--79. Fiber-containing material according to claim 9, wherein, after the
at least partially splitting the first and second segments from each other, to
form post-split fibers, the post-split fibers have dpf values less than that of the
multi-component fibers, and as low as 0.01 dpf.

CH
80. Fiber-containing material according to claim 20, wherein after
completely splitting the first and second segments from each other, to form
post-split fibers, the post-split fibers have dpf values less than that of the
multi-component fibers, and as low as 0.01 dpf.

81. Fiber-containing material made from a plurality of multi-component
fibers, each multi-component fiber including at least first and second
segments, the first and second segments being made respectively of a first
polymer material and a second polymer material, the first polymer material
having a higher melt temperature than that of the second polymer material,
the second segments having been melted and being a binder of the fiber-
containing material, the first and second segments having been at least
partially split from each other prior to melting of the second segments,
wherein the fiber-containing material has cross-over points of the first
segments with each other, where the first segments cross each other, wherein

15
General

the second polymer material, of the second segments, is substantially only at the cross-over points where the first segments cross each other, and wherein the fiber-containing material is a yarn.--
